



United States Department  
of Agriculture

National Agricultural  
Statistics Service

Washington Agricultural Statistics Service  
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# Washington Crop Weather

Released: March 31, 2003, 1:00 p.m.  
Week Ending: March 30, 2003  
CWP WA-CW1303

## Fuel Prices and Wet Weather Stall Fieldwork Moisture Improves Conditions Across the State

### Field Crops

Above normal rainfall improved the cropping outlook across the State. Fuel prices rivaled weather conditions as the main component for stalling fieldwork. In Whitman County, fieldwork and spring planting got underway in the west, but wet fields limited activity in the east to aerial fertilizer applications. Winter wheat conditions continued to look good. Spring wheat and barley seeding was underway. Christmas tree growers almost completed planting and began to make herbicide applications.

### Livestock

In western Washington, pastures experienced rapid forage growth as a result of unseasonably mild temperatures. Livestock producers were tending newly born calves and lambs while also fencing pastures for rotational grazing. Dairymen were getting equipment ready to do green chopping. Cattle producers in the Okanogan and Ferry County area were running short of hay and looked to turn cattle out on rangeland early. Range and pasture conditions were 29% poor, 62% fair, and 9% good.

### Fruits and Vegetables

In Douglas and Chelan Counties, cherry growers finished up with their pruning and apricot trees were in bloom. Orchard and vineyard pruning and cleanup neared completion. Cold temperatures this week in Benton County caused some bud loss. In western Washington, raspberry and blueberry growers were applying herbicides to control weeds and mowing cover crops.

#### Days Suitable for Fieldwork

Week	Days
This Week	5.8

#### Moisture and Supply

Item	Percent			
	VS	SH	AD	S
Topsoil	0	16	83	1
Subsoil	0	19	81	0
Irrigation Water	0	34	66	0
Hay & Roughage	0	11	89	0

VS=Very Short SH=Short AD=Adequate S=Surplus

#### Crop Progress

Crop/Activity	Percent Completed			
	This Week	Last Week	2001	5 Yr. Avg.
Spring Wheat Planted	27	NA	NA	NA
Spring Wheat Emerged	3	NA	NA	NA
Barley Planted	7	NA	NA	NA
Potatoes Planted	5	NA	NA	NA

#### Crop Condition\*

Crop	% Acreage				
	VP	P	F	G	EX
Winter Wheat Dryland	2	9	39	42	8
Winter Wheat Irrigated	0	15	60	25	0

VP=Very Poor P=Poor F=Fair G=Good EX=Excellent

\* Crop conditions are a measurement of the growing conditions and are not indicative of the quality of the crop produced.

# COUNTY COMMENTS

**Clallam/Jefferson:** Fieldwork began in most of the county. Some bottom land was still too wet to work. The high fuel prices were stalling fieldwork more than adverse weather. Pastures were showing new growth after several months of drought conditions. Precipitation has been below normal and temperatures have been slightly above normal.

**Grays Harbor:** The county awakened from a period of dormancy as the newly emerging foliage on native trees and shrubs created a tapestry of color across the rural landscape. The brilliant chartreuse foliage of big leaf and vine maples against a background of emerald green Douglas fir and cedars created a tapestry of color to rival the paintings of the world's greatest artists. Picturesque landscapes were further augmented with newly born calves on lush, green pastures. Home gardeners reported an earlier than usual arrival of hummingbirds and swallows. Ag producers were anxiously awaiting the opportunity to begin cultivating fields to begin yet another growing season. Rainfall during the early part of the week further delayed soil cultivation. Christmas tree growers applied residual herbicides between rain showers. Livestock producers were tending newly born calves and fencing pastures for rotational grazing. Raspberry and blueberry growers were applying herbicides to control weeds. Truck gardeners applied non-selective herbicides on fields to be cultivated for production this year. Heavy

rainfall last weekend resulted in minor flooding of farm ground along the Chehalis and Satsop Rivers.

**Snohomish/North King:** Fieldwork was on schedule or a little bit ahead of schedule. Fuel prices were preventing fieldwork a lot more than weather conditions. Temperatures were normal or slightly warmer than normal. Spring flowers were blooming everywhere which was a little early in some areas.

**Thurston:** Rainfall early in the week continued to frustrate agricultural producers who were biting at the bit to begin field cultivation. Soils remained super-saturated in many areas. Livestock producers were sectioning off pastures for spring grazing. They were pleased with rapid forage growth in pastures as a result of unseasonably mild temperatures. Blueberry growers were mowing cover crops. Dairymen were getting equipment ready to do green chopping. Persistent rainfall throughout the month had most ag producers several weeks behind in field cultivation. In many cases soils continued to be super saturated. Two minor flood events occurred during the month as a result of heavy rainfall with waters covering pastures and forage fields in many areas. Christmas tree growers finished planting trees and preparing equipment for herbicide applications. Truck farmers complained about rapid weed growth and conducive weather for cultivation.

## Central

**Benton:** Orchard and vineyard pruning and cleanup neared completion. Soil preparation was in progress. Cold temperatures this week caused some bud loss.

**Benton (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** The spring crops were being planted. Some moisture was received, but the county was still behind for the monthly average. Water should be turned on by the end of this week for irrigated crops.

**Douglas/Chelan:** Temperatures were beginning to warm up. Precipitation received over the winter months was a great relief to the county; however, subsoil moisture was still well below normal. Many areas within fields of winter wheat were in poor condition. Spring reseeding will be necessary for

many growers. Spring fieldwork began. Cherry growers finished up with their pruning. Apricot trees were in bloom.

**Okanogan/Ferry:** Fieldwork was beginning at the lower elevations. Some cattle producers were running short of hay and need to turn cattle out onto rangeland, although it appears that spring pastures need another 10 days to 2 weeks for ample growth with warmer weather and more precipitation.

**Yakima:** Average temperatures for March ranged from 6 degrees below normal to 15 degrees above normal, with .36 of an inch of precipitation. No crop losses due to weather conditions were reported.

## Eastern

**Adams:** Moisture conditions remained adequate for both spring and winter cereal production. Winter wheat remained in mostly fair conditions with small amounts in both excellent and very poor condition. Warmer weather during the past week was beneficial. Spring cereal planting will be mostly completed by the end of the week and about 5 percent has emerged to date.

**Asotin/Garfield:** Above normal rainfall was received during March and improved the overall cropping outlook. Farmers have been delayed in their spring work, but the moisture was welcomed. Winter wheat was in mostly good condition, but in many areas was smaller than normal due to late emergence last fall and winter. Pastures improved due to the precipitation, but many were still in poor condition from the past drought conditions.

**Lincoln:** Moisture conditions were adequate. Winter wheat was in mostly good to fair condition. Spring wheat and barley seeding began and will continue for the next 2 weeks.

**Stevens:** The county had adequate moisture this week. Pastures were just beginning to green up after a few days of warmer weather during the week. Local hay supplies were adequate.

**Whitman:** More welcomed rain enhanced soil moisture conditions further. Winter wheat conditions looked quite good and should respond very favorably as temperatures warm up. Fieldwork and a small amount of spring planting got underway in the western areas of the county, but wet fields limited activity in the eastern part of the county to aerial fertilizer applications. Cattle herds and sheep flocks continued to experience mild weather for spring calving and lambing.

National weather website: <http://www.usda.gov/nass/pubs/pubs.htm>

Washington Agricultural Statistics Service website: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/wa>

E-mail: [nass-wa@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-wa@nass.usda.gov)

**Weekly Weather Statistics  
March 30, 2003**

Station	Air Temperature				Growing Degree Days				Last Week Precipitation			Season Precipitation			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	Base 50F		Base 60F		Total			Total		% Normal	Days
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	Inches	DFN	Days	Inches	DFN		
WEST															
Bellingham Intl	33	57	47	3	2	-5	0	0	0.55	-0.08	3	18.66	-7.96	70	96
Everett	33	64	48	3	11	4	0	0	0.22	-0.55	3	19.74	-6.76	74	101
Hoquiam	31	64	48	1	6	-1	0	0	0.98	-0.46	4	52.14	-3.00	95	110
Kelso	30	72	50	4	15	8	0	0	0.00	-0.94	0	19.06	-16.86	53	75
Olympia	25	69	47	3	9	2	0	0	0.35	-0.65	3	30.61	-10.72	74	105
Seattle-Tacoma	34	66	49	3	11	4	0	0	0.20	-0.51	3	26.55	-3.11	90	96
Shelton	27	68	46	-1	7	0	0	0	0.51	-0.82	3	47.60	-6.70	88	101
Tacoma	28	70	48	3	11	4	0	0	0.09	-0.71	3	21.91	-9.51	70	92
Vancouver	30	72	49	3	12	5	0	0	0.40	-0.41	2	27.67	-4.73	85	99
CENTRAL															
Ellensburg	23	72	44	2	8	8	0	0	0.04	-0.10	2	6.99	0.38	106	63
Omak	22	75	45	6	9	9	0	0	0.00	-0.26	0	9.01	-0.30	97	46
Stampede Pass	22	55	36	6	2	2	0	0	1.92	0.41	4	50.65	-15.35	77	103
Wenatchee	32	73	48	3	15	8	0	0	0.01	-0.13	1	7.22	1.32	122	59
Yakima AP	24	78	46	2	15	9	0	0	0.06	-0.08	2	6.64	0.73	112	41
NORTHEAST															
Colville	28	64	44	4	0	-5	0	0	0.08	-0.33	1	13.07	-1.15	92	49
Deer Park	25	66	41	1	3	-2	0	0	0.35	0.00	2	16.17	3.59	129	67
Spokane AP	24	66	42	2	5	-1	0	0	0.48	0.18	3	11.76	0.55	105	69
EAST CENTRAL															
Ephrata	26	70	47	2	10	3	0	0	0.13	-0.01	1	6.54	1.35	126	41
Moses Lake	26	70	48	3	10	3	0	0	0.16	0.02	1	6.29	1.10	121	59
Quincy	27	73	48	2	12	6	0	0	0.00	-0.14	0	5.22	-0.42	93	42
Ritzville	24	62	42	-2	0	0	0	0	0.22	0.01	2	9.14	1.11	114	61
SOUTHEAST															
Hanford	28	74	50	0	14	0	0	0	0.10	-0.03	1	6.15	1.28	126	52
Pasco	28	80	52	3	25	12	2	2	0.08	-0.06	2	5.55	0.05	101	56
Pullman	31	70	43	3	6	6	0	0	0.58	0.15	4	7.93	-6.91	53	67
Whitman Mission	27	69	47	1	5	-2	0	0	0.10	-0.18	3	10.74	1.27	113	88
IDAHO PANHANDLE															
Coeur D'A' AP	28	59	41	-2	1	-4	0	0	0.68	0.20	3	13.51	-4.42	75	64
Lewiston ID	32	63	46	0	4	-3	0	0	0.13	-0.15	2	8.47	1.22	117	75

Summary based on NWS data.

Season Cumulative Precip Starts: Wednesday September 1, 2002

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

NA = Data Unavailable

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.

Precipitation Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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